

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD – LOUISE GRAY (MANAGER) – 01274 687588 – Email: louise@thelifenursery.co.uk**

**DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD – FRANCESCA EDWARDS (DEPUTY MANAGER) – 01274 687588**

**DEFINITION OF ABUSE - ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018’**

“…A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children”.

**RATIONALE**

Through our day-to-day contact with children and families, all staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and in referring concerns to the appropriate agency.

This policy is one of a series in the Life Nursery’s integrated safeguarding portfolio. Our core safeguarding principles are:

* Every member of staff who works with children at The Life Nursery has a responsibility for keeping all children safe
* the Life Nursery’s responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
* safer children make more successful children
* policies will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

**Safeguarding Portfolio**

Our integrated Safeguarding Portfolio details how we safeguard the wellbeing of our children.

It includes:

* Equal Opportunities Policy (including dealing with racist incidents and Single Equity Plan)
* Drug and Substance Misuse
* Positive Behaviour Policy
* Online Safety Policy
* Prevent Policy
* Anti-bullying Policy
* Care and Control Policy (use of physical intervention)
* Health and Safety Policy (which includes educational visits, First Aid and nursery security)
* Recruitment and Selection Policy
* DBS policy and guidelines
* Whistleblowing Procedures
* Complaints Procedure
* Managing Allegations Policy
* Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
* Intimate Care Policy
* Safeguarding the wellbeing of children in the EYFS

**Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and directors and are consistent with those of Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) and the statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2018). This policy has been updated to include the latest guidance from the DfE.

**Policy principles**

* The Life Nursery is committed to building a culture of safety in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery
* Welfare of the child is paramount
* All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, disability, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
* All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
* Children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

**Policy aims**

* To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
* To ensure consistent good practice
* To demonstrate the Life Nursery’s commitment with regard to child protection to children, parents and other partners
* To contribute to the Life Nursery’s safeguarding portfolio

**Terminology**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children and young people from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children and young people who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Life Nursery’s, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

**Role and Responsibilities of Key Child Protection and Safeguarding Staff**

On the first page of this policy are the details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for Child Protection and also the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. Their roles and responsibilities are detailed below:

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

* ensures that Safeguarding remains high profile in strategic direction of the nursery
* ensuring there is adequate online safety policy in place
* keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including how they will respond to it
* ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all staff and they are regularly updated and in line with our Health & Safety policy
* will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals made to social care or where appropriate the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR
* attends appropriate refresher training provided by the Bradford Safeguarding Board (updated every two years) to ensure that she has understanding of BSCB procedures
* ensures that Safeguarding Policies (including Child Protection Policy) are up to date, meet statutory guidance and are reviewed annually to ensure high quality safeguarding
* develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
* ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and provides an essential guidance to the safeguarding procedure to ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
* Remains aware of the welfare of children with a child protection plan and general child protection issues within the nursery
* ensures that practitioners understand the contribution they can make to safeguarding
* to ensure that staff receive appropriate training, keeping records of staff attendance at child protection training.
* ensures that mechanisms are in place for temporary staff (including supply), volunteers and visitors understand their role and responsibilities
* ensures that staff induction meets safeguarding requirements
* provides advice and guidance to parents and ensures that they have access to The Life Nursery safeguarding policies through our website and receive hard copies on request
* keeps written or electronic records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from the children’s general file
* refers cases of suspected abuse to children’s social care or police as appropriate
* notifies children’s social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
* ensures that when a child with a child protection plan leaves the nursery, their information is passed to their new setting and the child’s social worker is informed
* attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
* coordinates the nursery’s contribution to child protection plans
* meets with staff who raise a concern about a child and completes the Child Protection Referral with the member of staff.
* meets with children who have made a child protection disclosure or allegation
* supports the Early Help Assessment / Early Intervention Plan process.
* provides advice, guidance and training for staff

**What the Life Nursery staff should know and do**

* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
* All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the BSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the BSCB.
* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
* We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
* We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
* We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
* All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
* **All** staff will also be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: a child or children targeting specific child or children, in ways such as physically abusing (hitting, biting, scratching, pulling hair, name calling, shouting, snatching toys and staff will continually observe to ensure the risk of peer on peer abuse is minimised.

Peer on peer abuse should never be passed off as ‘part of growing up or part of learning’, should this be continuous or should a specific child always be targeted.

**What Life Nursery staff need to know**

* All staff members should be aware of systems within the nursery which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of their induction. This includes the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and identification of the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead.
* All staff members should also receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.
* Where staff cannot access the documents or training because of, for example, language differences, differentiated training will be provided.
* All staff understands what The Life Nursery expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct and following our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety, including the use of cameras and mobile phones, whistle blowing and dignity at work.
* Children have a key person to build a relationship with and supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
* All staff understand The Life Nursery policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
* Applicants for the posts within The Life Nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offences Act 1974.
* Enhanced criminal records and barring lists check and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at The Life Nursery or has access to the children.
* Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* Volunteers must be over 17 years or over, be considered competent and responsible, receive a robust induction and regular supervision meetings with the Manager, be familiar with the nursery’s policies and procedures and be fully checked for suitability if they have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
* Information is recorded about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
* the criminal records disclosure reference number;
* the date the disclosure was obtained;
* details of who obtained it
* All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
* Effective from 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in The Life Nursery are NOT required to notify the Manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children (Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006).
* Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussions of any safeguarding issues and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
* In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour (outlined in the employee handbook).

**What Life Nursery staff should do if they have concerns about a child**

If staff members have concerns about a child they should:-

* raise these with Life Nursery’s designated safeguarding lead. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members. The safeguarding lead will usually decide whether to make a referral to children’s social care, but it is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children’s social care directly.
* Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing, police) there will be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor. Staff should refer to Life Nursery Whistleblowing policy should they need to refer an issue directly to Bradford Safeguarding Board
* If a child is deemed of immediate serious harm or there is cause for concern, staff should contact the police to seek advice and next steps. A referral should be made to children’s social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child’s situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.
* It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

**Working with other agencies and sources of support**

In many cases, the situations in which children and young people find themselves do not meet the threshold for intervention by Children’s Social Care. However, there are Local Authority agencies and voluntary sector organisations that can support the young person and their family to improve the situation. These include:

* Families First
* Early Help team
* Children’s Centres (where there is a child under 5 years in the family)
* Barnardos

Appropriate sources of support can be accessed through the Initial Contact Point, Family Information Service (Bradford Council) and Bradford Safeguarding Childrens Board.

**Good practice guidelines**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children we need to agree standards of Good practice. This good practice underpins the mission, vision and values of The Life Nursery to ensure that all our children are known, valued and understood.

This includes:

* treating all children with respect
* setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately, as outlined in our ethical code of conduct
* involving children in decisions that affect them
* encouraging positive and safe behaviour among children
* being a good listener
* being alert to changes in children’s behaviour
* recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
* reading and understanding the nursery’s safeguarding and child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues as outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.
* Talking to the child and offering reassurance before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, administering first aid, changing nappies.
* maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
* being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of abuse.
* Providing opportunities through the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning and teaching styles to inform children about issues regarding their safety and wellbeing.

**Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

The Life Nursery is aware of other factors that affects the children’s vulnerability that may affect or may have affected children and young people using our nursery, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, fabricated or induced illnesses, children abused linked to beliefs in spirit possession, children who do not have English as a first language, sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse, female genital mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.

Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats.

**Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

The Life Nursery will support children and their families and staff by:

* taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
* The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding lead will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. This applies where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child.
* responding sympathetically to any request from children or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
* maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
* storing records securely
* following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
* cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

**Supporting Families**

* The Life Nursery believe in building a trusting and supportive relationship with families, staff and volunteers.
* We make clear to parents our roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection such as reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child and liaising at all times with Bradford Social Care team.
* We continue to welcome children and their families whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection plan as set out by the children’s social worker in relation to The Life Nursery’s designated role and tasks in supporting the child and their families, subsequent to any investigation.
* We will engage with any child in need or early help plan as agreed.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the children’s parents who have parental responsibility in accordance with the nursery’s Confidentiality policy and only if appropriate, under the guidance of the BSCB.

**Allegations against staff and complaints**

The Whistleblowing policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. If a staff member wishes to share their concerns on a particular issue which they deem sufficiently important and do not feel able to approach their immediate manager there is the facility to speak to the OurBD4 Board. Issues that warrant serious attention will always be pursued to resolution. All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Nursery Manager.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid

to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to children and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Nursery Manager.

Allegations against the Nursery Manager should be reported to the OurBD4 Board of Directors. Details of the Nursery procedures can be found in the Managing Allegations policy.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Further information is contained in the Nursery’s disciplinary procedures.

* The Life Nursery ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the nursery, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* We ensure that all staff, volunteers and anyone else working in The Life Nursery knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct of behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
* We differentiate between allegations and concerns about the quality of case or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
* The Life Nursery respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person working in the nursery which includes:
* Inappropriate sexual comments;
* Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
* We will recognise and respond to allegations that a member of the team has:
* Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to the children
* We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse of a staff member or volunteer within The Life Nursery, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to the OUR BD4 Board of Directors and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate Dawn Holt on 01274 435600 or offer advice (Maryam Shaheen 01274 437043 mayam.shaheen@bradford.gov.uk )
* The Life Nursery will report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures The Life Nursery have taken. The Life Nursery are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* The Life Nursery co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* Where the management team and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families, throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

**Safer recruitment**

OurBD4 CIC endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ ‘safe’ staff by following the guidance in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) together with the local authority and the Nursery’s individual procedures.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

* complete an application form
* provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant’s suitability to work with children and young people
* provide evidence of identity and qualifications
* be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate to their role.
* All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the Nursery’s safeguarding and child protection policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

**Photography and images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children we will:

* seek consent from parents for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
* seek parental consent
* use only the child’s first name with an image
* ensure children are appropriately dressed
* encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
* Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by The Life Nursery.
* Any photographs of children taken using the IPAD are deleted once printed, however are stored electronically on The Life Nursery’s laptop which is password protected and held securely in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
* Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.

More information on the appropriate use of photography and video can be found in the Online Safety Policy.

**Online Safety**

Most of our children will have access to mobile phones, IPADS, tablets and computers away from the nursery. The Life Nursery however, understand that everyone uses technology differently, therefore we have a strict no mobile phone policy within the nursery. Anyone needing to use their mobile phone will be escorted to the office or asked to go outside. The Life Nursery encourage staff and volunteers to refrain from contacting parents via social media sites, personal mobiles or private email outside of nursery hours. However, The Life Nursery understands that you may already be friends with parents prior to the child starting nursery. The Manager must be notified of this in order to safeguard everyone concerned.

**Child protection procedures**

The following guidance is taken from ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children‘ (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)

**Types of abuse and neglect**

**Abuse**: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include noncontact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms, including (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

**Contextual Safeguarding**

Children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside and beyond their families. These extra-familial threats may arise at nursery, school, other educational establishments, peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats which include: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered (Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

**Specific safeguarding issues**

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues, eg. NSPCC.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The Life Nursery can access broad government guidance on the issues listed below via the GOV.UK website:

* child sexual exploitation (CSE)
* bullying including cyberbullying
* domestic violence
* drugs
* fabricated or induced illness
* faith abuse
* female genital mutilation (FGM)
* forced marriage
* gangs and youth violence
* gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
* mental health
* private fostering
* radicalisation (Prevent)
* sexting
* teenage relationship abuse
* human trafficking
* modern slavery
* Peer on peer abuse
* Honour-based violence
* Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

If we become concerned that a child maybe a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.

We will be alert to threats that children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.

**Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** The Life Nursery are aware of the mandatory duty to report cases of FGM to the police. The nursery are aware of the importance of following BSCB safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting the police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed. Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. All staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 11-12 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to previously. Staff should activate BSCB procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care.

**Indicators of abuse – what you might see**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they ‘tell’. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons, it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Remember, it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

* have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
* show signs of pain or discomfort
* keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
* look unkempt and uncared for
* change their eating habits
* have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
* appear fearful
* be reckless with regard to their own or other’s safety
* frequently miss nursery or arrive late
* show signs of not wanting to go home
* display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
* challenge authority
* become disinterested in playing at nursery
* be constantly tired or preoccupied
* be wary of physical contact
* display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the Designated Lead to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

**Taking action**

The Life Nursery has a clear set of procedures that must be followed if there is a concern, detailed in the flowchart in the appendix to this policy and which is displayed in the office, kitchen and nappy changing area and parent board.

**If you suspect a child is at risk of harm**

There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at risk, but you have no ‘real’ evidence. The child’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, or you may have noticed physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the learner the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine to ask the child if they are OK or if you can help in any way.

If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed you should follow the advice in the section ‘If a child discloses to you’ (see below). If, following your conversation, you are concerned, you should discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

* The Life Nursery understands how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
* Understand that The Life Nursery should refer a child who meets the s.17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services
* Understand that The Life Nursery should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to the local authority children’s social work services

**If a child discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child:

* Never promise a child that you will not say anything to anyone else.
* Allow them to speak freely.
* Remain calm and do not over react – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
* Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’.
* Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child.
* Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child’s mother thinks about all this.
* At an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
* Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
* Follow the procedure for reporting your conversation outlined above.

A frame for recording conversations with children which may be of help, is in an appendix at the end of this document.

**Notifying parents**

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are usually discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this would put the child or other person at risk, or may interfere with a course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is unreasonable to seek advice. Advice will be sought from social care or sometimes in circumstances, police where necessary.
* Parents are informed when we make a record of concern on a child’s chronological report and we will make a note of any further discussions regarding the concern.
* If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time the referral has been made, except where procedures of BSCB and local safeguarding partners does not allow this, eg where it is believed that a child may be put at risk.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser where sexual abuse may have occurred.
* If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider seeking advice from children’s social care about whether or not to advise parents beforehand and should record and follow the advice given.

**Referral to children’s social care**

The Designated Officers will make a referral to children’s social care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child. Members of staff can also make referrals directly to children’s social care (see the flowchart in the appendix for telephone numbers). Once a telephone call has been made to social care, a Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) will be made within 24 hours and sent securely to Children’s Social Care. childrens.services@bradford.gov.uk

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board state: ‘*A practitioner making a referral to Children’s Social Care should be informed of the outcome and the reasons for any decisions made within one working day by telephone and in writing. Both the contact/social worker and the referrer should record the outcome of any discussion and agreement about any on-going action required by the referrer’.*

For more information see the Multi Agency Continuum of Need.

**Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Nursery Manager (depending on who is the subject of the concern). Any information is shared under the guidance of the BSCB/local safeguarding partners and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Information Sharing 2018.

Information is:

* processed for limited purposes
* adequate, relevant and not excessive
* accurate
* kept no longer than necessary
* processed in accordance with the data subject’s rights
* secure.

Confidential Incident Forms and other written information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort should be made to prevent unauthorised access and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items should be encrypted and kept in locked storage.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the child’s nursery file.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the Nursery Manager.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent nursery staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child (Information Sharing 2018).

**Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. Routinely, only the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make referrals to outside agencies, although anyone can make a referral to the children’s social services. However, they may also share information directly with children’s social care, police or the NSPCC if:

* the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead and the Directors are unavailable.
* **they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the children’s safety.**

**Summary**

Child protection and safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults who work or volunteer at The Life Nursery. All staff should assume that “it could happen here.” Any concern about the well-being of children must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as immediately. It must never be assumed that someone else will make that report. Keeping children safe whether in The Life Nursery or in the wider community, is a priority.

**Legal Framework**

Children Act (1989 s47)

Protection of Children Act (1999)

The Children Act (2004 s11)

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Childcare Act 2006

Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Equality Act (2010)

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)

Children and Families Act (2014)

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)

What to do if you’re worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)

Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)

Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (2018)

Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)

Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG 2015)

Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings (October 2018)

Reviewed December 2019

Policy read and agreed by:

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